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## **DHEC Health Advisory**

Distributed via Health Alert Network  
15 Sept 06, 5:00 pm

### **Increased Surveillance for Cases of *E. coli* O157:H7 Associated with Fresh Pre-Bagged Spinach in a Multi-State Outbreak**

#### **Summary**

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SC DHEC) is requesting heightened surveillance for persons presenting with symptoms consistent with *E. coli* O157:H7.

For cases that meet both the clinical and exposure criteria of *E. coli* and recent consumption of fresh pre-bagged spinach, please contact your local public health department and collect stool specimens for testing by the DHEC Bureau of Laboratories (BOL).

#### **Background Information**

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued an alert to consumers about an outbreak of *E. coli* O157:H7 in multiple states that may be associated with the consumption of produce. To date, preliminary epidemiological evidence suggests that pre-bagged fresh spinach may be a possible cause of this outbreak. As of Sept 15, 2006, 58 cases and 1 death have been reported in 10 states: CT, ID, IN, KY, MI, NM, OH, OR, UT, and WI. Eight cases of hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS) have been associated with this outbreak.

Although currently no cases have been reported in SC, pre-bagged fresh spinach is nationally distributed and therefore heightened awareness is warranted at this time.

#### **Clinical criteria**

Clinical syndromes associated with *E. coli* O157:H7 infection include:

1. Gastroenteritis with diarrhea and abdominal cramps (fever and bloody stools may or may not be present), **OR**
2. Hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS) with or without gastroenteritis: the triad of acute renal failure, thrombocytopenia and microangiopathic hemolytic anemia usually seen in young children, **AND**
3. Full-blown thrombocytopenic purpura (TTP): the pentad of HUS plus neurologic signs (seizures, altered mental status), fever, and thrombocytopenia.

**\*Management is supportive. Antibiotics for *E. coli* O157:H7 gastroenteritis are generally NOT recommended, as there are some reports of increased incidence of HUS when antibiotics are used.**

## **Epidemiological/Exposure criteria**

Presence of clinical syndrome within 1 to 8 days of consumption of fresh pre-bagged spinach.

## **Laboratory criteria for diagnosis and testing of clinical specimens by DHEC**

Isolation of Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* from a clinical specimen is necessary for case confirmation. If clinical syndrome and epidemiological criteria are met, collection of a stool specimen in Cary-Blair transport media is requested. Transport specimens on cold packs.

Please contact your local public health office for coordination of transport to the DHEC BOL. The DHEC BOL will test these specimens for shiga toxin; shiga toxin-producing organisms will then be cultured for identification of *E. coli* O157:H7.

## **Additional Sources of Information**

For additional information, check the following websites:

- FDA warning on serious foodborne *E. coli* O157:H7 outbreak:  
[www.fda.gov/bbs/topics/NEWS/2006/NEW01450.html](http://www.fda.gov/bbs/topics/NEWS/2006/NEW01450.html)
- *E. coli* infection infection and disease information:  
[www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/submenus/sub\\_ecoli.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/submenus/sub_ecoli.htm)
- The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control:  
[www.scdhec.gov](http://www.scdhec.gov)

## **DHEC Contact Information for Reportable Diseases and Reporting Requirements**

Reporting of enterohemorrhagic *E. coli* (includes O157:H7) is consistent with South Carolina Law requiring the reporting of diseases and conditions to your state or local public health department. (State Law # 44-29-10 and Regulation # 61-20) as per the DHEC 2006 List of Reportable Conditions available at: [http://www.scdhec.gov/health/disease/docs/reportable\\_conditions.pdf](http://www.scdhec.gov/health/disease/docs/reportable_conditions.pdf)

Federal HIPAA legislation allows disclosure of protected health information, without consent of the individual, to public health authorities to collect and receive such information for the purpose of preventing or controlling disease. (HIPAA 45 CFR §164.512).

## Regional Public Health Offices

Call reports to the Epidemiology Office in each Public Health Region.

### Region 1

**(Anderson, Oconee)**  
220 McGee Road  
Anderson, SC 29625  
Phone: (864) 231-1966  
Fax: (864) 260-5623  
Nights / Weekends: 1-866-298-4442

**(Abbeville, Edgefield, Greenwood, Laurens, McCormick, Saluda)**  
P.O. Box 3227  
1736 S. Main Street  
Greenwood, SC 29646  
Phone: 1-888-218-5475  
Fax: (864) 942-3690  
Nights / Weekends: 1-800-420-1915

### Region 2

**(Greenville, Pickens)**  
P.O. Box 2507  
200 University Ridge  
Greenville, SC 29602-2507  
Phone: (864) 282-4139  
Fax: (864) 282-4373  
Nights / Weekends: (864) 460-5355 or  
1-800-993-1186

**(Cherokee, Spartanburg, Union)**  
P.O. Box 4217  
151 E. Wood Street  
Spartanburg, SC 29305-4217  
Phone: (864) 596-2227 ext. 210  
Fax: (864) 596-3443  
Nights / Weekends: 1-800-993-1186

### Region 3

**(Chester, Lancaster, York)**  
P.O. Box 817  
1833 Pageland Highway  
Lancaster, SC 29721  
Phone: (803) 286-9948  
Fax: (803) 286-5418  
Nights / Weekends: 1-866-867-3886

**(Fairfield, Lexington, Newberry, Richland)**  
2000 Hampton Street  
Columbia, SC 29204  
Phone: (803) 576-2749  
Fax: (803) 576-2998  
Nights / Weekends: (803) 304-4252

### Region 4

**(Clarendon, Kershaw, Lee, Sumter)**  
P.O. Box 1628  
105 North Magnolia Street  
Sumter, SC 29150  
Phone: (803) 773-5511  
Fax: (803) 775-9941  
Nights/Weekends: 1-877-831-4647

**(Chesterfield, Darlington, Dillon, Florence, Marlboro, Marion)**  
145 E. Cheves Street  
Florence, SC 29506  
Phone: (843) 661-4830  
Fax: (843) 661-4859  
Nights / Weekends: (843) 660-8145

### Region 5

**(Bamberg, Calhoun, Orangeburg)**  
P.O. Box 1126  
1550 Carolina Avenue  
Orangeburg, SC 29116  
Phone: (803) 533-7199  
Fax: (803) 533-7134  
Nights / Weekends: (803) 954-8513

### Region 5 (cont)

**(Aiken, Allendale, Barnwell)**  
1680 Richland Avenue, W. Suite 40  
Aiken, SC 29801  
Phone: (803) 642-1618  
Fax: (803) 643-8386  
Nights / Weekends: (803) 827-8668 or  
1-800-614-1519

### Region 6

**(Georgetown, Horry, Williamsburg)**  
2830 Oak Street  
Conway, SC 29526-4560  
Phone: (843) 365-3126, ext 138 or ext 174  
Fax: (843) 365-3153  
Nights / Weekends: (843) 381-6710

### Region 7

**(Berkeley, Charleston, Dorchester)**  
4050 Bridge View Drive, Suite 600  
N. Charleston, SC 29405  
Phone: (843) 746-3806  
Fax: (843) 746-3851  
Nights / Weekends: (843) 219-8470

### Region 8

**(Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton, Jasper)**  
219 S. Lemacks Street  
Walterboro, SC 29488  
Phone: (843) 525-7603, ext 214  
Fax: (843) 549-6845  
Nights / Weekends: 1-800-614-4698

### Bureau of Disease Control

**Division of Acute Disease Epidemiology**  
1751 Calhoun Street  
Box 101106  
Columbia, SC  
Phone: (803) 898-0861  
Fax: (803) 898-0897  
Nights / Weekends: 1-888-847-0902

### Categories of Health Alert messages:

**Health Alert:** conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

**Health Advisory:** provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action. **Health**

**Update:** provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.